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# Crafting Relevant Community Partnerships Using Archives

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# COMING TO THE PLAINS: LATIN@ STORIES IN CENTRAL NEBRASKA

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Laurinda Weisse, University Archivist  
University of Nebraska at Kearney



We wish to first recognize that we are the guests living on lands represented by Native Nations whose sovereignty, governance, and treaty lands existed long before the state of Nebraska. These Nations include the Omaha, Ponca, Santee, Ho-Chunk or Winnebago, Lakota, Pawnee, Cheyenne, Arapahoe, Otoe-Missouria, Ioway, Kaw, Sac and Fox or Mesquakie, Kickapoo, and Delaware Nations.

# About University of Nebraska at Kearney

- Began as a normal school; still heavily focused on training educators
- 5300 undergraduate and 1600 graduate students
- ~10% Hispanic/Latin@
- Strong undergraduate research program



# Archives & Special Collections

- Historically, focused on institutional records
- Revised collection policy – 2015
  - Student life
  - History of Education
  - Central and western Nebraska

# Origins of Coming to the Plains

- Collaboration between Laurinda Weisse in Archives, Dr. Michelle Warren in Modern Languages, and Jacob Rosdail in Communications
- Proposed oral history interviews with Spanish-speaking immigrants to central Nebraska
- Funded by campus Research Services Council Diversity Grant

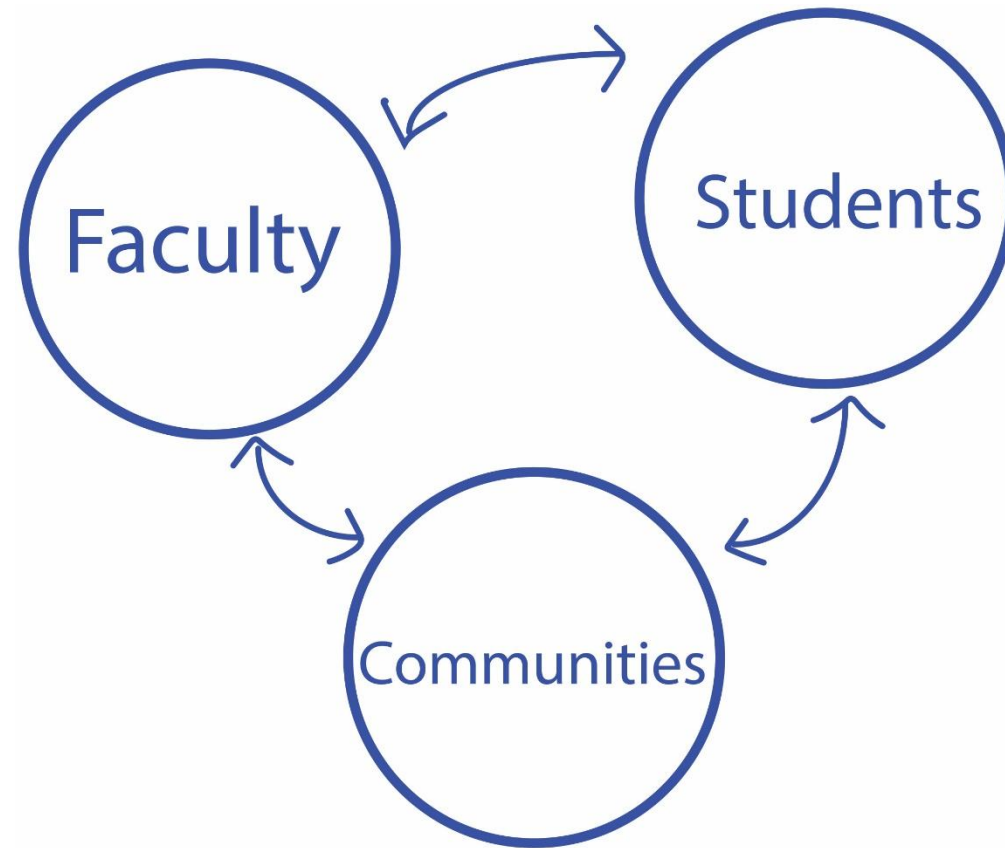
# Objectives

- Fill archival silences
- Collaborate with Latin@ communities to capture their stories
- Build understanding of Latin@ immigrants in the communities in which they reside

While:

- Engaging students in research

# Partnerships

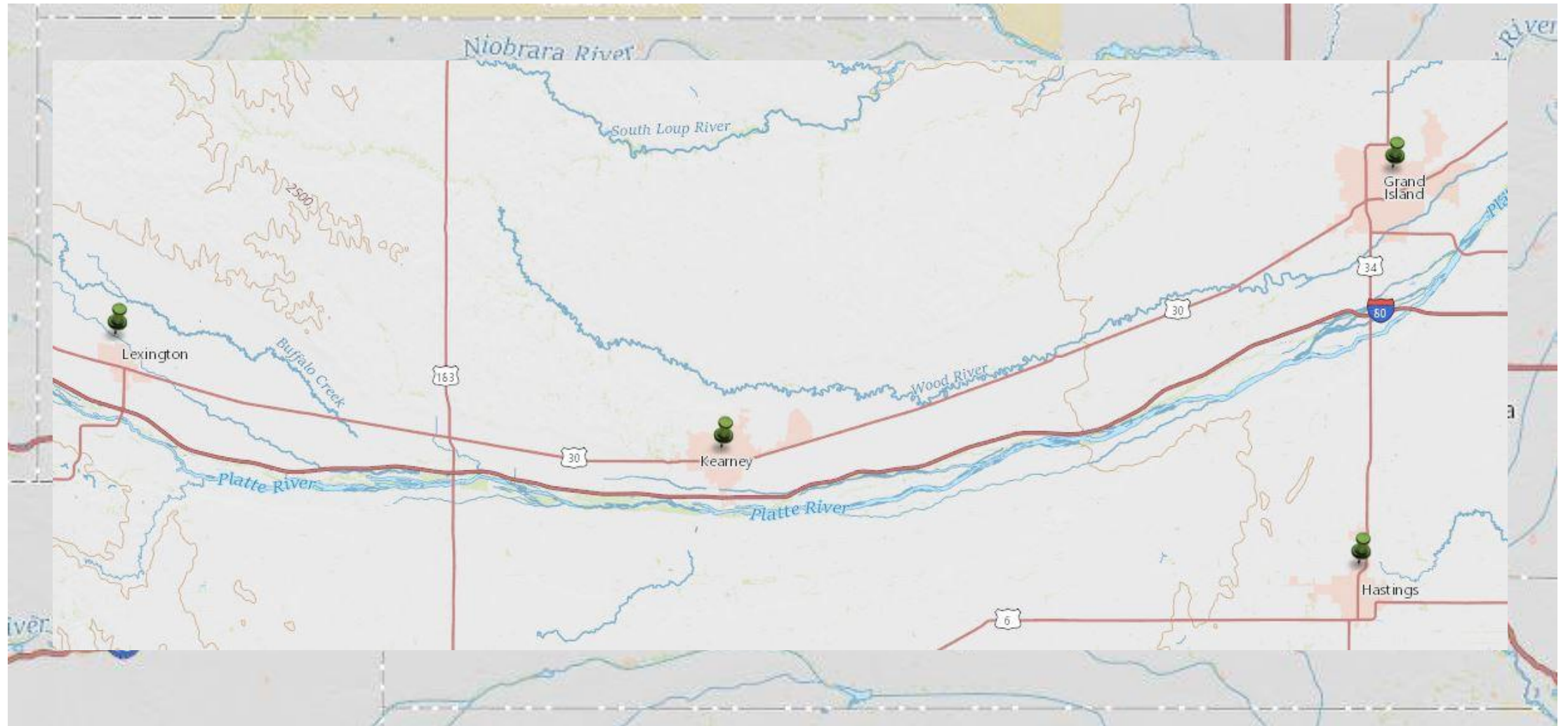




# Community Demographics

City	Population	% Hispanic or Latino
Grand Island	48,520	26.7
Hastings	24,907	9.8
Kearney	30,787	4.1
Lexington	10,230	60.4

# Participating Communities



# Informed Consent

Institutional Review Board

Participants chose level of identification

- Completely anonymous
- Pseudonym and location
- First name and location
- Full identification

# Choosing Questions

- What country are you originally from?
- Could you tell me about your life there?
- Why did you leave?
- What was your experience coming here like? OR Talk about how you came here.
- What was your first impression of the United States? Did it live up to what you expected?
- How were you treated when you first arrived in the United States? Are you treated differently now?
- Could you talk about your work experience here?
- How is your family life different here than it would have been in your home country?
- What are some of the major challenges you've faced while being here?
- Do you feel your experiences would have been different if you were of the opposite gender? How?

# Recruitment

- Personal contacts
- Snowball sampling
- Advertising project in targeted community organizations and businesses

*¡Cuéntenos Su Historia!*

-TELL US YOUR STORY-

Buscamos historias de inmigración a Nebraska de países hispanos.

Si quiere compartir su historia, y formar parte de una colección de historias de inmigración, póngase en contacto con nosotros.

Participantes recibirán una tarjeta de regalo de \$50.

-SU DECISION DE PARTICIPAR O NO PARTICIPAR NO AFECTA EN ABSOLUTO CUALQUIER CALIFICACIÓN ACADÉMICA



DR. MICHELLE WARREN | WARREN2@UNK.EDU | (818) 312-1423

# Interviews

- 17 completed
- Countries represented:
  - Colombia
  - Cuba
  - El Salvador
  - Guatemala
  - Honduras
  - Mexico
  - United States

# Common Themes

- Religion
- Hardship
- Importance of family
- Community

# Transcription & Translation

- End-goal: fully bilingual materials
- Transcription: done by students, in their native language
- Translation: done by Modern Languages class, as a group



# Pain Points

- Institutional bureaucracy
- Timing
- Student reliability
- Technical challenges/delays

# What Next?

- Photography of selected interviewees
- Public access via OpenSPACES (Institutional Repository)
- Podcast
- YouTube channel
- Exhibits
- Documentary?

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LnUpqZt4oiM&feature=youtu.be>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-hGzZNHOu4&feature=youtu.be>
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hp3Earm\\_oqg&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hp3Earm_oqg&feature=youtu.be)

“I think it’s important that our stories get told, because our voice is all we have to express ourselves. By having it out there, someone is going to hear and relate to it and want to tell their stories....we will create a collective book of stories that are unique to each person.”

– Leslie Garcia



# UNO LIBRARIES

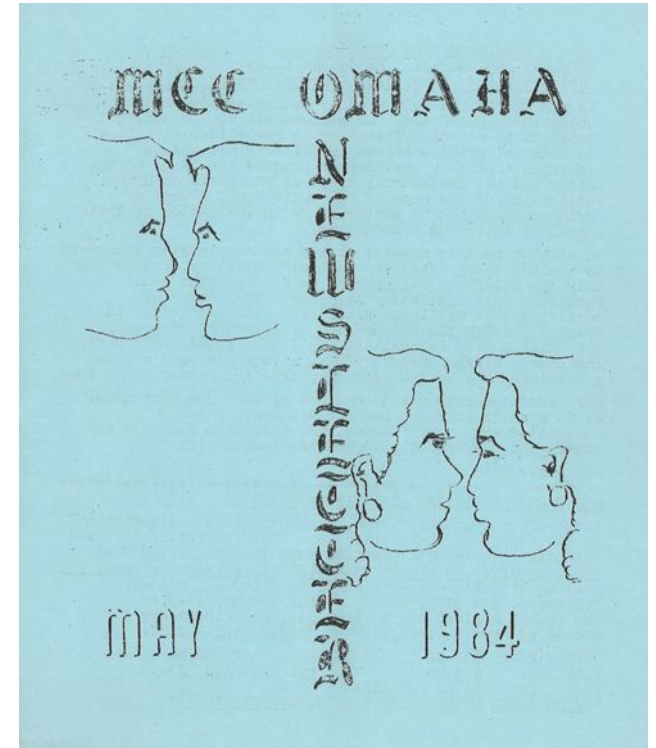
## **LGBTQ+ Voices:**

The Queer Omaha Archives  
Oral History Project

Amy Schindler, Director of Archives & Special Collections

# Queer Omaha Archives

- Established in 2016
- Over 20 collections
- 80+ cubic feet and 3+ GB and growing





**Dr. Jessi Hitchins**



**Dr. Jay Irwin**

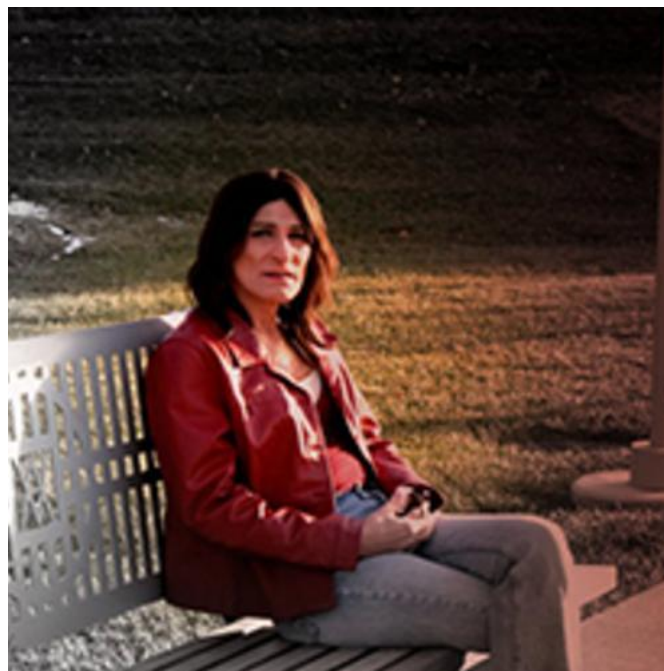
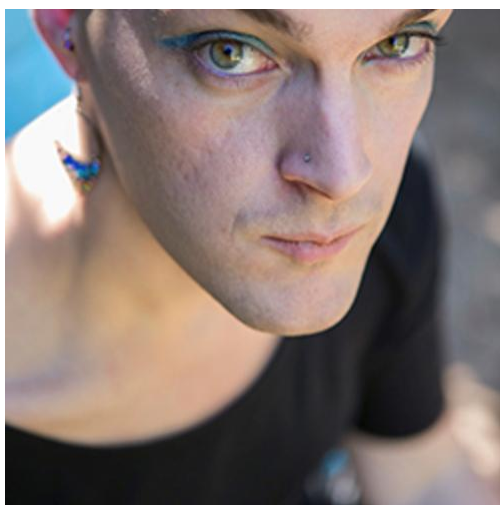




Steve Jackson, Meredith Bacon, Terry  
Sweeney, Bob Darcy, Carolyn Fiscus







Tammy Story, Dominique  
Morgan, Scott Jones, James  
Pennington, Shari Baumer



<https://queeromahaarchives.omeka.net/>

# Interviews

- Collected by students: 12
- Collected by faculty: 2
- Collected by oral history associate Luke Wegener (grants & private \$): 20 online and 8 in progress
- Demographics:
  - People of Color: 8
  - Transgender Folks: 7
  - Women: 16
  - White, Cisgender Men: 10

[Home](#) > [UNO Oral History Collection](#) > [LGBTQ+: Interview with Meredith Bacon](#)

### LGBTQ+: Interview with Meredith Bacon

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[https://library.unomaha.edu/\\_audio/UNO-0240\\_Meredith-Bacon.html](https://library.unomaha.edu/_audio/UNO-0240_Meredith-Bacon.html)

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#### Item Description

Title	LGBTQ+: Interview with Meredith Bacon
Interviewer	Luke Wegener
Description	Dr. Meredith Bacon, retired UNO Professor of Political Science and LGBTQ+ activist, was interviewed by Dr. Jay Irwin on September 21, 2016, in Omaha, Nebraska. Bacon shared information about growing up on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, attending an all-boys boarding school (Pomfret School) in Connecticut, her years at Colorado College and the University of Denver's Graduate School of International Studies, her scholarship in Romanian and Moldovan politics, her relationship with wife Lynne, coming to terms with her gender identity in the late 1990's, and her transition and coming out process in 2005.
Biographical Sketch	<p>Dr. Meredith Bacon, born in New York City in the late 1940's, is a white, trans woman, UNO Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Nebraska Omaha, LGBTQ+ activist, scholar in Romanian and Moldovan politics, and according to the Omaha World-Herald, is likely the first transgender person in America elected as a college or university faculty leader. Bacon earned a BA in History in 1968 from Colorado College, and a PhD in International Relations in 1976 from the University of Denver. After graduating, Bacon moved to Omaha, where she taught Political Science at UNO for 38 years (1976-2014) and published her 1979 book, <i>Behind Closed Doors: Secret Papers on the Failure of Romanian-Soviet Negotiations, 1931-1932</i>.</p> <p>During her time at UNO, Bacon served three terms as Faculty Senate president (2001, 2004, 2013), won the 2006 College of Arts &amp; Sciences Excellence in Teaching Award, supported organizations like Nebraska AIDS Project and River City Gender Alliance, and served as Chair of the Board of Directors for the National Center for Transgender Equality, where she lobbied for transgender rights and anti-discrimination laws at the local, state, and federal levels. Each year since 2015, the Dr. Meredith Bacon Lavender Maverick Award is presented at UNO's Lavender Graduation to an individual with an outstanding history of contributions to the UNO LGBTQIA+ campus community.</p>



DR. C.C. AND MABEL L. CRISS LIBRARY

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The Queer Omaha Archives preserves Omaha's LGBTQIA+ history as part of the UNO Libraries' [Archives & Special Collections](#). Historical materials documenting Omaha's diverse LGBTQIA+ communities are collected and made available to the public by archivists and librarians to more widely share Omaha's stories.

We welcome opportunities to share the material already in the archives with individuals and organizations and are actively seeking additional material to preserve and share in the archives. [Contact us](#) for more information, to arrange a tour or presentation, to discuss [donating material](#), to [make a financial contribution](#) to support LGBTQIA+ history in Omaha, or to learn about other ways to support the [Queer Omaha Archives](#).

### Featured Item

#### [LGBTQ+ Voices: Interview with Cami Cavanaugh-Rawlings](#)



Click here to access the interview, LGBTQ+ Voices: Interview with Cami Cavanaugh-RawlingsMs. Cami Cavanaugh-Rawlings, Omaha radio personality,...

### Recently Added Items

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Click here to access the interview, LGBTQ+ Voices: Interview with Eris KoleszarMs. Eris Koleszar, Omaha community activist and musician, was...

#### [Introduction to LGBTQ Studies: Interview with Joe Price](#)



#### [Introduction to LGBTQ Studies: Interview with Lynne Mytty](#)



Click here to access the interview, Introduction to LGBTQ Studies: Interview with Lynne MyttyAn oral history interview with Lynne Mytty concerning her...





## LGBTQ+ Voices: Interview with Cami Cavanaugh-Rawlings

UNO Libraries - Oral History Projects

Luke Wegener, Interviewer

LGBTQ+ Oral History Collection (Finding aide available at <https://archives.nebraska.edu/repositories/4/resources/604>)



### 60:27 - Music career

[Play segment](#)

[Segment link](#)

**Segment Synopsis:** 1:00:27: Playing guitar in 5th grade; 1:02:02: First band experiences; 1:03:01: Lavender Couch; 1:03:30: Opening for Ani DiFranco; 1:05:32: Venues; 1:06:54: Songwriting with wife Shell; 1:09:36: Bathtub Maria; 1:11:06: Omaha music scene; 1:12:26: Male-dominated music scene; 1:19:22: 2017 OEAA nomination

### 80:34 - Wife Shell

0:00 - Introduction

0:20 - Growing up in Omaha

4:10 - Familial homophobia

13:51 - Catholicism

16:28 - Relationship with parents

25:36 - Early realization of sexuality

29:13 - 1980's gay bars

33:14 - UNO (1988-1992)

36:47 - Radio and nonprofit careers

60:27 - Music career

Transcript ☒ Index

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<https://queeromahaarchives.omeka.net/>

# Thank you!

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Omaha



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